

REMARKS

By the present amendment, new claims 31-34 have been added. Support for the new claims is found in the original application, in particular in Examples 5-8 on page 10 of the specification.

Claims 1-34 are pending in the present application. Independent claim 1 and claims 2-11, 19-23, and 31-32 dependent directly or indirectly on claim 1 are directed to a polarizing element. Independent claim 12 is directed to a liquid crystal display. Independent claim 13 and claims 14-18, 24-25, and 33-34 dependent directly or indirectly on claim 13 are directed to a method of manufacturing a polarizing element.

In the Office Action dated May 24, 2004, claims 1, 8, 11-14 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by US 5,825,542 to Cobb, Jr. et al. (Cobb), claims 1-8, 11-16 and 19-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over US 5,999,243 to Kameyama et al. (Kameyama) in view of Cobb, claims 9 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Kameyama and Cobb, further in view of US 5,880,800 to Mikura et al. (Mikura), and claims 10 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Kameyama and Cobb, further in view of US 6,288,172 to Goetz et al. (Goetz).

It was alleged in the Office Action of May 24, 2004 that Cobb discloses the combination reflective polarizer layer + diffusing adhesive layer to improve coloring, and Kameyama discloses a cholesteric reflective polarizer with retarder layer in a display, so that it would have been obvious to use the diffusing adhesive layer of Cobb in the display of Kameyama.

Further, in the Advisory Action dated September 29, 2004, it was alleged that the arguments made in the request for reconsideration filed September 17, 2004 (i.e., that the

reflective polarizer used in Cobb is a specific multilayer linear polarizer, and Cobb is completely silent regarding other types of reflective polarizer, in particular circularly-polarized light separation plates, so that there would have been no motivation to modify Kameyama by referring to Cobb) were not considered persuasive because (i) they were not presented before the final office action, and (ii) it would have been obvious to combine Kameyama and Cobb because Kameyama discloses linear polarizers “as needed,” Cobb discloses diffusive adhesive with multilayer linear polarizers, and monolayer as well as multilayer polarizers are “widely known in the art.”

The rejections are again respectfully traversed. In particular, full consideration of the argument made in the response filed September 17, 2004 is respectfully requested. In this respect, it is submitted that, following the personal interview of July 27, 2004, the argument made in the response of September 17, 2004 expanded on the argument made in the response filed on March 3, 2004, which stated on page 7:

The reflective polarizer used in Cobb is clearly a multilayer linear polarizer, and Cobb is completely silent regarding a reflective polarizer comprising a circularly-polarized light separation plate.

Specifically, the teaching of Cobb is explicitly limited to a linear reflective polarizer, because Cobb states: “The diffusely reflective mirrors and polarizers described herein rely on the unique and advantageous properties of multilayer optical films.” (Cobb at col. 4, lines 18-20). It is noted that the multilayer optical film of Cobb is a linear reflective polarizer.

Further, contrary to the assertion made in the Advisory Action that “Kameyama (primary reference) discloses the use of linear polarizers as needed”, Kameyama is completely silent as to the use of linear reflective polarizers, let alone multilayer linear reflective polarizers as in Cobb, so that a person of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to replace the cholesteric polarizer or the absorptive polarizer of Kameyama by the multilayer linear polarizer of Cobb.

In addition, it is submitted that the diffusion layer provided in Cobb is used, not to prevent coloring, but to reflect external light. Specifically, Cobb states at col. 4, lines 52-62:

Multilayer optical films constructed according to the present invention exhibit a Brewster angle (the angle at which reflectance goes to zero for light incident at any of the layer interfaces) which is very large or is nonexistent. In contrast, known multilayer polymer films exhibit relatively small Brewster angles at layer interfaces, resulting in transmission of light and/or undesirable iridescence."

In other words, Cobb indicates that its multilayer optical films are free from undesirable iridescence, i.e., coloring. Accordingly, the purpose of the diffusing film is not to prevent coloring, but "[t]he diffusely reflecting polarizers and mirrors are useful, for example, in LCD's used in either a reflective or transfective mode" (Cobb at col. 2, lines 13-15), i.e., the diffusing film is used to address external light effects in reflective or transfective displays. As a result, Cobb does not provide any teaching or suggestion regarding advantages and/or drawbacks of various types of diffusing film in other constructions or for other purposes.

In contrast, the present inventors have determined that a light-diffusion pressure-sensitive adhesive layer provided to a reflective polarizing plate comprising a circularly-polarized light separation plate has the advantage that undesirable iridescence (coloring) can be prevented. This construction and its advantages are not taught or suggested in any of Kameyama and Cobb, since Kameyama addresses coloring by using an oriented layer of a liquid crystal polymer having specific haze properties, and Cobb is silent as to both circular polarization and the use of a diffusing film to address undesirable coloring. Further, the coloring improvement is unexpected based on the limited disclosure of Cobb and the teaching away of Kameyama. Therefore, for these reasons alone, the present claims are not obvious over any combination of the Kameyama and Cobb.

In addition, with respect to claims 31-34, it is submitted that Kameyama and Cobb are completely silent as to a polarizing element comprising two or three light-diffusion pressure-sensitive adhesive layers provided to the reflective polarizing plate. Therefore, for these reasons alone, claims 31-34 are not obvious over any combination of Kameyama and Cobb.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the rejections should be withdrawn.

In conclusion, the invention as presently claimed is patentable. It is believed that the claims are in allowable condition and a notice to that effect is earnestly requested.

In the event there is, in the Examiner's opinion, any outstanding issue and such issue may be resolved by means of a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of the response period. Please charge the fee for such extension and any other fees which may be required to our Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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